Kawasaki 650 Dual Sport News

Newsletter of the Kawasaki 650 Dual Sport Owners Group

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Moto Musing

Gino Pokluda

DEALING

Few topics will stir emotions between riders, as does the topic of purchasing products through mail order versus purchasing through a dealer. I have seen discussions on this topic flare into heated arguments with blood vessels popping out of the necks of the participants and no doubt, my thoughts will spur heated feedback to this Newsletter. Even on the Internet, you can sense the animosity between the two factions as evidenced by a recent discussion on the DUST newsgroup.

For the record, I am on the pro-dealer side of the fence and I realize that there is little I can say in this column that will bring pro-mail-order people over. In fact, I think that there can actually be a happy mix of mail order and dealer support. What baffles me, however, is the amount of vindictiveness that exists between some groups of riders and the local dealerships. I myself have witnessed this with a local club and the dealer which sells the brand the club represents. I will spare you the gory details, but it is by no means a rosy relationship and amazingly, the club does very little to try to mend the differences and simply propagates the conflict by informing new members that they do not do business with this particular dealership.

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...Moto Musing

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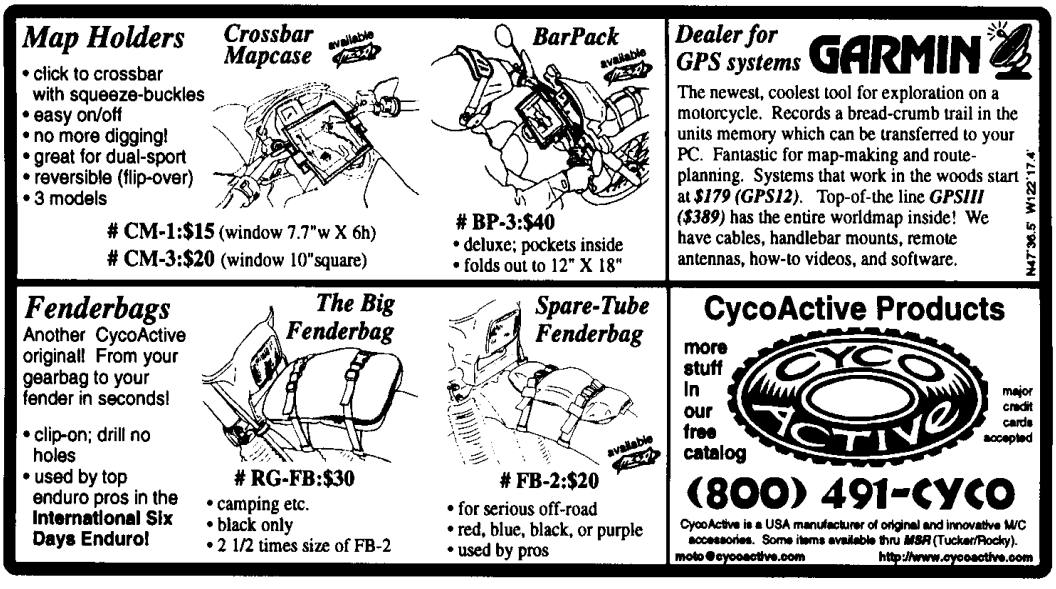
On the other hand, I can look at the relationship I have with the three dealers that I do the majority of my business with, and see the benefits. I have been working with these three dealers for years and can walk into anyone of them at anytime and be certain that I will be greeted by name at the parts counter or sales floor. All three will meet and sometimes beat prices found on products in mail-order houses. All three have liberal return policies and excellent service. There is no rocket science involved here, it is simply good business sense and communication between the customer and the dealership. The dealership realizes that that there are a hundred ways for us to spend our disposable income and that motorcycles parts, service and accessories are a mere fraction of those. While the majority of the "good-dealer" formula falls squarely on the shoulders of the dealer, i.e. their ability to emerge from the dark ages and move into the mainstream of customer support, a sizeable share of the formula also falls on the customer. The good customer realizes the importance of having a competent dealership and continues to support it and is therefore willing to take the extra step and work with the dealer.

After interviewing some of the parts and accessories distributors for this article, I was somewhat surprised to find that mail-order houses are by no uncertain terms viewed with a certain amount of contempt by the people who supply them. Again I will spare you the details, but the conflict is the direct result of pricing issues and their conflict with the dealerships, which represent the bread and butter earnings to the wholesalers.

I do want to make clear that not all mail order falls into this boat on rough waters. Companies such as Aerostitch Rider Wearhouse, Dual Star, and JC Whitney all offer products that are difficult, if not impossible to purchase through dealerships. These companies have sought out or manufactured unique products for the motorcyclist and offer them through mail order, which is far more economical than building stores throughout the country. Then there is mail order through an out of town dealer. This is the fine line of mail order in my book as some mail-order houses simply masquerade, as dealerships while others are full service dealerships that offer mail order service.

In summary, I think it is very important to realize that a dealership provides important services that a mail-order house simply cannot; the bike you ride simply did not fall out of the sky. Furthermore, for a dealer to meet your expectations, you must communicate your needs with the personnel clearly. In most cases, I think you will see that the relationship with the dealer can be fruitful. In few cases will the dealer fail to respond. If it does, you take your business elsewhere and let them know it. For the most part, however, you will get out of a dealer what you put in.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UPDATES

GIVI USA News

Paul with Givi USA has informed me that Givi USA will not longer sell the Five Stars luggage carriers for the KLR650 made specifically for Givi luggage. For insurance reasons, the popular carriers will not be carried although the latest order will be filled. Givi, recognizing the popularity of the tubular rack, has opted to begin manufacturing its own line of tubular racks for DP bikes. It is also rumored that new, dual purpose friendly, cases are on the drawing board, that will be smaller than the 28 liter boxes. Also worthy of note, is that Givi is now stocking the complete Givi line from Europe which include windshields, luggage, and engine guards for various makes and models.

Pancho Villa and Copper Canyon

Pancho Villa Motor Tours and K650DSN are teaming up for a ride to Copper

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Canyon Mexico in October 1998. The trip will be about 6 to 8 days long and costs will be between $100 and $150 dollars a day, depending on the level of support provided by Pancho Villa. The ride is ideal for all who have been wanting to go to Mexico, but are intimidated by lack of local information. All skill levels are acceptable and from what I understand, the scenery is spectacular. For more information, check out the **Kawasaki 650 Dual Sport web site** at www.geocities.com/~klrdsn and be sure to fill out the Copper Canyon ride survey so that plans can be firmed up over the summer.

Suspension News

Progressive suspensions will be marketing a rear shock for the KLR650 soon. A time frame was not available at print time, but should be sometime this spring. Stay tuned.

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A Place to Sit a Spell

Gino Pokluda

If there were one item that most motorcycle manufacturers, bar none, tend to skimp on, it would have to be the seat. The majority of the seats that come with today's motorcycles simply do not offer an acceptable perch for the rider to spend long periods of time. As member, "Jake" Jakeman, put it; It doesn't matter how many horse power you have, or how fast your bike is, or how big your fuel tank is if you cannot sit on your bike for a 100 miles at a time. For me, the key amount of time to remain painless in the saddle is two hours. Fortunately, KLR650/Tengai models are blessed with wide flat seats that offer plenty of potential for extended stints at the helm. The KLX650, on the other hand, is a victim of the dirt bike look and has a very narrow seat. Both models, however, can benefit from seat alterations that will allow the rider to dial long distance more comfortably.

After talking with a number of ergonomics specialist about seats, it became obvious that there are a number of elements that come into play that determine how comfortable a seat is; and the structure of the seat is only a part it. With regards to motorcycles, the handlebars and foot pegs determine how your body will be positioned, particularly how your pelvis tilts and how much weight your bottom has to support. For the average person, the KLR, KLX and Tengai put the rider in an upright position. Legs are bent at about 90 degrees which means your legs, most notably your thighs, are not providing much support for your bottom. This means your butt must support the majority of your weight. For this to be done effectively over a period of time, your seat must be as wide or wider than you and must have a dense, supportive material to allow your body weight to be spread over the entire area of your bottom. The narrower the seat, the less area you have to support your weight and the more pressure is focused per square inch of your bottom. The KLR650 and Tengai sport seats that are 12" across in stock form. Cut that seat in half, lengthwise and you have the atrocious KLX650 seat.

So the key to comfort is a wide, flat seat with thick supporting foam, plain and simple. Early KLRs and the Tengai suffered from having a foam seat body that broke down rapidly. I can almost push my hand to the seat pan on my 1990 Tengai and my derrière is usually in pain after only 50 or so miles. The newer KLR650's have a nice dual density foam stock and should hold up for a while. For those looking to improve their seating arrangements, however, there are some good options.

Pads

Seat pads offer the simplest form of seat modification. Most are simply "throw overs" that you sit on. They basically supplement the existing seat and are the lowest cost alternative. The Bunz-Ez pad is an Elasto-gel pad measuring about fourteen inches by fourteen inches. It has a smooth nylon top cover and neoprene lower cover to keep it from sliding. I used this pad on many trips and found that it did improve the comfort level noticeably. It adds about ½ inch to the seat height and cost about $60.00. Since the Bunz-Ez is simply a medical grade gel pad, it can also be used as a hot pack and cold pack by putting in the microwave or freezer.

Rojo Inc. markets the AirHawk air adjustable seat cushion. Originally developed for wheelchair bound patients and truckers, the AirHawk as a waffle pattern of air chambers covered in a nylon/neoprene cover. A small hose allows the rider to adjust the firmness of the cushion. The Airhawk does not work well on the narrow seat of the KLR650 and would be more at home on a wide cruiser seat. It adds over an inch to the seat height and tends to bunch up in the middle no matter how the air is adjusted. And at almost $100.00, there are far better alternatives to gaining seating comfort.

A simple sheep skin pelt seems to offer the best return on investment for comfort. I have used a blemished pelt I purchased from a local retailer of sheepskin products and have had very good results. A pelt cut in half will usually work for two bikes and should be in the forty to fifty dollar price range. When purchasing a pelt, be sure that the nap is no more the ¼ inch long. The shorter nap provides better cushioning and is easier to clean.

Seat Rebuilding

Having your seat rebuilt can be a dicey proposition. If your seat does not turn out the way you expect, you have no OEM seat to replace it with, so it's best to deal with a reputable company when having major work done on your seat. Motorcycle seats are very different than automobile or household upholstery. If you want to have the work done local to you, ask around the bike shops for recommendations of upholstery shops that

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... Sit a Spell

Travelcade seat in the KLX650. Still narrow but much more comfortable than the stock seat.

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have experience with motorcycle seats. Listen for terms like mutli or infinite density foam, marine grade naugahyde and steam fitting. If the shop starts talking about cotton batting, run for your life!

Another option is to send you seat to a seat rebuilder such as Sargent Cycle Upholstery. I have had several seats done at Sargent's and can find little if any complaint with their work. The KLR650 seat I sent arrived back within two weeks; rebuilt with their "Super Cell" multi density foam and a nicely finished charcoal colored seat cover. The seat was a bit taller than stock, and the foam was firm and comfortable. I made a number of trips on the Sargent seat and can say that it was better than stock. Although Sargent's cannot make a seat much wider than stock, they can do some very trick foam alterations at your request. Simply draw what you want done with complete instructions and send the seat to them. They will call you and get further details on how you want the seat and before you know it, you will have a custom seat.

Travelcade/Saddlemen offer a seat kit for both the KLR650/Tengai and KLX650C (dual sport). I sent a KLX650 and a KLR650 seat to Travelcade to have their new Dual Sport Saddle kit applied. The kit consists of all new foam with a gel pad inserted. The gel is supposed to provide better support and comfort than foam. Unfortunately, a problem with gel is that it gets very hot in direct sunlight. For this reason, Travelcade buries the gel pad under a layer of foam. The seats arrived as promised, the KLX seat in the factory turquoise and black and the KLR650 seat in black. The KLX650 seat bolted on without problem and looks drop dead gorgeous on the KLX650. It is also a vast improvement over the torturous stock seat. I can now ride until the tank runs dry as opposed to my butt and legs going numb within fifteen minutes. The KLR650 seat did not fare as well. Initially, I could not get the seat to fit the bike and only after 20 minutes of wrestling did I finally get it bolted on. The seat pan was contorted out

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New SuperTrapp Muffler

SuperTrapp has come out with a new muffler for the KLR650. It is a tunable internal disc model with what is claimed to be the smallest diameter canister on the market. The new SuperTrapp IDS model uses smaller discs secured by three non-stripping bolts that will hopefully prevent the stripping problem found on the older models. The new IDS model comes in a racing series and a quiet series, which is said to be quieter than the popular E.A. R model yet flows better. The IDS muffler was designed and tested on a KLR650 and should be available by early January.

Al Jesse Panniers Are Real

This December, I got a first hand look at the all new Al Jesse aluminum panniers for the KLR650, and must say they are a real sweet set up. Look for a full write-

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up on the panniers in the March/April issue.

Cover Photo

The cover photo or painting in this case is supplied by Aero Design (Aerostitch Rider Wearhouse). The fellow shoveling the snow is Ed Peterson, Aero Design's graphic artist, and in the garage is his trusty, highly modified Tengai, with a low 45,000 break-in miles. The art work was done by Rick Kollath using gouache, an opaque water color.

If you would like to submit a cover photo, please send one in with a brief description of the picture. If you would like it back, please include a self-addressed and stamped, envelop with it.

Directory

If you would like to be included in the next K650DSN directory, please send your name, address, phone and e-mail address. The next directory will be in the July/August 1998

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... Sit a Spell

The Russell Day-Long saddle cuts a strange profile but is probably the most comfortable. Notice rear section is made flat for strapping gear to it. A rear section just like the front can be added for those who ride two-up.

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of shape and large gaps were evident where the seat met the bodywork. The reason this happened, I learned after talking with Travelcade seat engineers, is that the seat covers are heated in an oven before they are stapled to the seat pan. The KLR650 seat pan is so flexible, that when the mounted cover cooled and shrank, it also bowed the seat pan. Travelcade has noted this and will not heat the KLR650 covers as much. The seat is firm, comfortable and about ½ inches wider than stock. A unique feature of both seats is the use of Spandura, a combination of Cordura and Spandex, and vinyl in the seat cover. At first I was skeptical of the durability of the seat cover, but later learned that Spandura is the material of choice by rock climbers and because it is extremely durable and breathes very well. I also liked the fact that it kept me from sliding about when wearing my riding suit. The seat kits for both bikes are about $160.00 and are available in a wide assortment of colors.

Most readers will agree that the strangest seat in the whole group is the Russell Day Long seat for the KLR650. I will be quick to point out, however, that it is probably the most comfortable. To get one of the seats made, you must first have someone photograph you seating on your bike. Then you send the picture, a sketch of color and stitching, your weight and your seat to Russell and they do the rest. There are several KLR riders who have done this and I have heard no complaints. While I have no experience with the Russell, it does seem to have the key ingredients for comfort: a wide seating area and bolstered sides. Member, Norm Coffenberry, tells me that their service is exemplary and that his seat cost about $240.00.

Corbin Seat

Mike Corbin saddles have long been the standard for after-market seats. I have owned a number of motorcycles that I have either put a Corbin on or had come with a Corbin and have never had a complaint about the comfort of the seat. To the best of my knowledge, Corbin is the only company that offers a complete seat, i. e. seat foam, seat pan and cover, for the KLR650/Tengai. They do not offer a seat for the KLX650. Over the years, I have heard both good and bad regarding Corbin saddles, but the good have always outnumbered the bad. One of the reasons Corbin seats are so good, is the FiberTech seat pans which are used in all of their motorcycle seats. Next time you have the seat off on your KLR, grab both ends and twist the seat. You will see that there is a surprising amount of give in the seat pan. You cannot twist a FiberTech seat pan, they are very strong and stable. Add multi-density foam and a well made cover and you have very good seat, that is if you order anything other than the standard KLR650 seat. Mike Corbin's funky dual sport design does not work well on the KLR650 unless you are looking to reduce seat height or enjoy sliding into you gas tank every time you hit a bump or stop. That is why I have worked with Corbin on coming up with what I hope will be a new Corbin seat design specifically for the KLR650. The seat remains flat all the way from the front to back just like the stock seat, measures a full 13 inches across and does not have the "valley" in the middle associated with the Corbin dual sport seats.

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.... Sit a Spell

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Unfortunately, the seat arrived too late for me to evaluate it on a long ride, but I was able to get a couple of short fifty-mile rides in before the winter snows came. Early impressions are that the seat will be very comfortable for long haul riding, but increases the seat height due to its width. If you barely fit your KLR650 or Tengai now, this seat will be too high for you. The Corbin may also interfere with those who need to shift about in the seat during off-road ventures. If all of this sounds good to you, be forewarned, the price of comfort is not cheap and the Corbin seat for the KLR650 will cost about 250 bones depending on the seat cover options you use.

Conclusion

So there you have some choices for changing the current seating arrangements on the KLR/ Tengai and KLX650. If you have a seat that is need of repair and you want an easy out, Sargent Cycle Upholstery is the way to go. If you are-looking for a little more support for the occasional long tour, then the Travelcade would be a good choice. If you need something for the long haul, the Corbin and Russell would be the best choice. Also be sure to check out the contributions by David Minor and Steven Johnson elsewhere in this issue.

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If your mailing label has **RENEW** in the upper right corner, you'd better pay your subscription dues if you don't want to miss out on the next issue!

Web Page News

The Web Page is doing very well and will be updated periodically with news on the rally. Please send comments and suggestions to Bill Haycock, his e-mail address in on the page. For those who have not visited the page, it is located at www.geocities.com/~klrdsn. Also, please submit photos for the photo album.

Utah Get-Together

Things are heating up for the 2nd Annual Utah Get-Together. Looks like we may have a dinner planned at the Old City Park put on by the local off-road club. Meal tickets will be sold at check-in time. Lots of

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self-guided rides are on tap and our own Elden Carl said he may even put on a tech session. Plenty of touring, both on road and off abound in this area, so plan on going. We will be sharing Moab with a large car show too, so get your rooms early. Dates are April 24-25 1998. I will be staying in the Super 8 Motel (800-800-8000) and the Rodeway Inn (800-228-2000) is just across the street. The number for the Moab Visitor Information Center is 800-635-6622. Hope to see you there.

OTHER IMPORTANT DATES

HSTA Star Rally will be in Taos, NM in June of 1998. K650DSO will be hosting dual sport rides at the HSTA event.

Four Stroke Singles National Owners Club will have their national rally in Red River, New Mexico on September 8-9, 1998.

BMW Owners National Rally will

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Thumper Racing Seat Cover and Foam Cap for KLX650C

by Steven "scooter scum" Johnson

When Gino gave me the opportunity to evaluate the Thumper Racing seat modification for the KLX. I jumped at the chance. I have been very vocal about how uncomfortable the KLX seat is for long trips. Yes, I'm silly enough to spend 500 mile days on my KLX. Something had to be better. I tried the simple fix of placing computer mouse pads under the stock cover, but it just made the bike look ugly … well OK uglier. I was ready for a real solution. Just as I received the kit, my KLX went in for major work (see related story). I went down and picked up the seat and installed the kit.

The Kit is fairly easy to install. I used a flat screwdriver and pliers to remove the old seat cover. The first thing you notice is the Thumper Racing seat cover is significantly thicker than the Kawi seat cover. It should be much more durable. I went to install the new seat cover with an electric stapler and some staples I had left from insulating the basement. I started to install the cover using lots of muscle to stretch the cover over the seat. I got about half way through the job and realized the staples I was using were far too long. The points went clear through the seat base and stuck out the other side. An off road trip like that would turn my thighs into hamburger.

Off I went to get shorter staples. I ended up with 3/8" upholstery staples. After about an hour, the seat was installed. The seat cover had one little pucker in it, but otherwise looked good. The foam cap made the seat significantly softer. I ended up waiting months to try out the seat waiting for my hop up project to finish.

Once the bike was running again, I jumped on the bike to discover the first change with the new seat…my legs felt shorter. I was able to sit flat footed on the seat and now I'm on my tippy toes. I really did not think of that aspect of the seat cap but I guess it only makes sense.

Running with basically a new motor, I need to go out and break it in. I took several 60-80 mile trips through the mountains around Boulder Colorado. During these trips I discovered the softer seat initially felt comfortable, but over time my butt would start to burn and then eventually go to sleep. I tried a longer trip up to the top of Moiscietto Pass, 13,200 Foot pass between Fairplay and Leadville, with my Aerostich riding suit. Still my butt would burn on long trips.

Off road the seat would be great!! It made sitting down on rough sections to be much less punishing on the body. The comprimise was that I had a longer streach to the ground.

I fully support good companies giving us products to evaluate. While I was looking for a good solution to my touring woes, I discovered a great seat for off road riding. I highly recommend this seat for tall people that plan on ridding off road frequently. I do not recommend it to improve the KLX seat for touring.

Travelcade Dual Sport Seat for Suzuki DR650SE

Photos and Text by David Minor

When I sent my comments on the Suzuki DR 650, I was anticipating putting a new Corbin saddle on it. It never materialized. By the time the local Suzuki-Yamaha-Harley dealer got the saddle from Corbin, which took about a month, they had lost my phone number. So-they promptly sent the saddle back to Corbin. When I finally got word of this, I was disgusted enough to go elsewhere. The fine folks (Doug and Pat) at Doug's Kawasaki in Farmington then tried to order the Corbin for me. On this second attempt to connect with Corbin, we learned that the Corbin saddle only fits the IMS (4.9 gal.) fuel tank. At $239 for the saddle and $211 for the tank, that was deeper than I wanted to get into the whole thing.

Then our esteemed editor reminded me that Suzuki sells a gel saddle for the big DR. R&S Kawasaki in Albuquerque were happy to procure one for me. It took a mere few days and the DSN 10% discount was applied.

The Suzuki gel saddle (see photo) is actually made by Travelcade, on plastic seat bases supplied to them by Suzuki. Before mounting the new saddle, I transferred six rubber blocks from the stock saddle, a practice which Travelcade later told me was optional. By so doing, a gap was left around the perimeter of the saddle. In my particular case, at 6' 4" in

...Travelcade Seat for DR650

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height, I didn't want to lower the seat height any more than necessary.

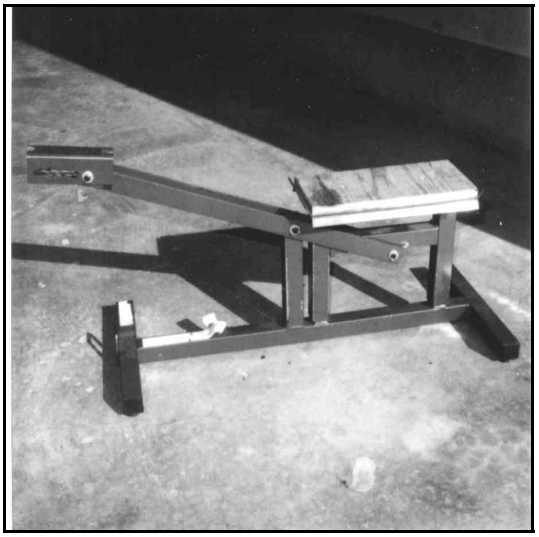
As advertised, however, the gel saddle height seems much lower, so much so that, for me, the ergonomics were changed unacceptably. In addition, the black "Spandura" cover of the saddle is very slippery, sending me sliding up against the tank every time the brakes were applied. Finally, the "contact patch" of the gel saddle is flatter and wider than the stock, and to me, no more comfortable. After a brief acquaintance (less than 50 miles), the gel saddle was returned to Suzuki.

This saddle may be just the thing for others, but not for me. I look forward to reading the review of the Travelcade saddles the editor has been working on. This experience has taught me that if you like the ergos of a bike, don't tinker with them.

I've had much better luck with another product--the Progressive Suspension service stand (see photo). It was spotted in a corner of the local Honda dealership. I tried it on a Honda XR650L in the showroom, and it looked like a good product, so I took it home. As we know, doing chain maintenance, or even checking your oil is a pain on a machine without a center stand. According to published specification, the DR650 shouldn't fit this service stand, but it does, with a little nudge. By my measurement, the PS stand has fixed heights of 11 1/8", and 16 3/16'. Suzuki claims the DR650 has a ground clearance of 10.4". The DR can be slid onto the stand in its lower position and used that way, with both tires still lightly on mother earth, or cranked up to the high position, leaving plenty of daylight under the rear wheel, speaking technically. I like that arrangement, but I can also see the virtue in having an aftermarket center stand.

I look forward to reading comments from other owners of the DR650 and DR350, as well as XR650L riders. For that matter, I'd like to hear comments on the Kawasaki Concours, which has been catching my eye lately. But I digress.

Travelcade seat made for Suzuki. Since Suzuki supplies the pans and contract Travelcade for the seats, the Suzuki name can be printed on the saddle. Kawasaki will not allow their name to be printed on the Travelcade seat kits for the KLR650 and KLX650.



Progressive Suspension lift stand. Will work well on the DR650 or Honda, but is too tall in its lowest position for the KLR650 which has only 9" of ground clearance.

(Continued from page 7)

be in **Missoula, Montana on July 9-12, 1998**

K&P Reusable Oil Filters

K&P Engineering now makes their popular stainless steel reusable oil filter for the KLR650. I have one in my KLR and will report on it this summer sometime. The filters are made from laser cut, surgical grade, stainless steel cloth and can filter an absolute 35 microns as opposed to the usual 15 to 80 microns of paper filters. Aside from being reusable for the life of the engine, the steel filter also needs less pressure to force oil through. The K&P filter will flow 1.9 gallons of 90 weight oil per minute (per square inch of filter at 70 degrees F) and only requires 1 p.s.i. of pump pressure to do it. K&P filters are available from **Arrowhead Motorsports, 2970 Desert Rd., Moab, UT 84532, 801-259-7356**.

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Carl's Corner

Technical Insights by Elden Carl

The good news is that the KLR650 engine is one of the toughest and easiest engines to work on ever produced. The bad news is there are two components in the engine that could cause instant, catastrophic engine failure.

The clutch basket has brittle springs in the back side (towards the engine) which will eventually fracture and break. Because of poor design, the coils can get out of the basket and into the flow of oil. I found one that had worked its way through the engine and into the oil screen just in front of the oil pump. I shudder to think what would happen if that piece of spring coil escapes the spinning clutch and gets between the primary drive spur and its driven gear, or between transmission gears.

I found my second clutch basket with broken springs on my 54,500 mile KLR650 engine. I also have found two others on other bikes. I believe that nearly all pre-1996 KLR650s will have broken clutch basket springs by 25,000 miles and some much earlier.

Kawasaki denies they have had any problem with the KLR650 clutches and further states they have never had a complaint about them. This is interesting since I have filed two formal complaints, one through George Galbraith of San Diego's House of Motorcycles and the other myself. Both were denied despite the best efforts of my dealer.

There is some good news, however. For 1996 and newer KLR650's (including a few late 1995 models) Kawasaki has corrected the problem with a redesigned clutch basket. The springs are now heavier and will be trapped by the basket if they do break. The springs are also a beautiful blue color indicating proper heat treatment and they look as if they will never break.

I sent an old clutch basket to Bob Mosher of Falicon for study. He reports to me that Falicon has no springs or rivets that would fit the KLR clutch housing. This means that there is no after market replacement for the defective pieces.

The second problem relates to the balancer adjustment bolt on the lower left side if the engine. One of the three salvage engines I've purchased blew up because the balancer chain ran off its sprockets and took out the cam chain. At first I thought the owner had forgotten to adjust the chain, but closer examination revealed that he had tightened the bolt so tight, that it crushed the adjuster lever which is not properly supported on the back side. From that point on, even if he loosened the bolt, the spring loaded adjuster arm could not move because it was deformed and dragging against the case.

Again, Kawasaki denies this is a problem. However, the 1996 and later models have a redesigned adjuster bolt, a heavier spring and a larger, thicker washer to better spread the torque load on the adjuster lever. These can be installed on all KLR650 engines.

If you own a pre-1996 KLR650 or Tengai, you should do the following. First, remove the clutch cover and pull your clutch basket off for inspection. Also check your filter screen and clean it. I have found safety wire, electrical tape and other junk in my screens. One of my salvage engines actually died due to oil starvation to the top end; yes , the filter screen was clogged. Note: the black plastic like stuff is from the balancer chain and idler sprockets.

If you are under warranty, Kawasaki may warranty your basket springs, otherwise forget about getting help from them. The new clutch can be installed in the pre-1996 engines, but some machining must be done, and several other '96 parts must be installed, including the primary drive spur gear. Do not accept another pre-96 basket because it has the same problems as what you have now.

As for the balancer chain adjuster bolt problem, pull the dyno cover and examine the plate. If you have over tightened the bolt, you may find an inoperative adjuster. Note: Kawasaki gives no torque specs for this bolt. Even if you have not destroyed the bolt, it is best to install the redesigned bolt, washer, O-ring and spring. Those of you who are not ham-fisted may be okay. To correctly adjust the balancer chain, turn the bolt out three turns, then tap the end of the bolt with a plastic mallet before tightening again. DO NOT OVER TIGHTEN THE BOLT!

I'll keep you posted as to any new information as it becomes available. I'll also let you know how I'm doing on my small claims action against Kawasaki and my attempt to force Kawasaki to recall all pre-1996 engines for safety repairs.

If any of you find any of the above problems with your KLR650/Tengai engines, please write me with the details so that I can use the information in my recall petition.

Elden Carl, PO Box 591, Jacumba, CA 91934

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Kawasaki Soft Luggage for the KLR650

Despite the fact that we have covered a multitude of hard luggage options in this Newsletter, the overall favorite luggage type by the majority of the readers has been soft luggage. There are many choices of soft luggage available to the KLR rider as we have covered in previous issues, but the favorite up until now has been the Ortleib Dry Bags offered by Rider Wearhouse and Dual Star. That may be about to change with the introduction of the new made-for-KLR650 soft luggage, which consists of saddlebags, tail trunk and tank bag. Kawasaki USA Accessories Division designed the luggage specifically for the KLR650 although some of the pieces will fit the Tengai and KLX650. When the luggage arrived, I must admit I was skeptical. Could a motorcycle manufacturer make better luggage than companies who have dedicated their entire existence could? Well, the answer to that is, yes, thank you very much. Kawasaki has managed to design some very nice pieces that will complement the venerable KLR650 and add to its already healthy resume of versatility. If being waterproof is extremely important to you, then read no further. If you're like me and pack everything in plastic bags and Zip-Locs anyway, then read on. Not only is the Kawasaki luggage not waterproof it does not even sport storm flaps over the zippers. Karl Edmonson of Kawasaki USA tells me the reason for this is to make the zippers as easy to operate as possible. I can tell you that the zippers on my luggage are a dream to work. With one arm full of gear, ready to toss into the saddlebag or tail trunk, I can unzip the piece with one hand, not having to grab and tug with both hands. The lack of a storm flap is only part of the reason though. All of the pieces, except for the tank bag, are made from a foam-backed Cordura which gives the luggage some shape and form. Also, in a well thought out design, all of the zippers make gentle turns instead of sharp 90 degree angles around the luggage. All of the pieces use Fastex quick release buckles to attach to the bike and when cinched down correctly, are solidly mounted with little if any play.

Each saddle bag holds about 20 liters of gear, not including the large outside pocket on each bag. The bags are joined by a non-adjustable wide center strap which worked fine on all of the after market seats I tested. Another cross strap at the back of the saddlebags is adjustable and threads through the luggage rack grab handles. At the bottom front of each bag, another strap secures to the passenger foot peg mounts. The saddlebags are designed to ride over the plastic side panels, not over the muffler. The right side bag does have a built in heat shield. My KLR650 has the excellent Driveline Services side protector frames and the Kawasaki luggage works excellent with them. If you choose to have the luggage ride against the plastic, it would be a good idea to invest in thick, static-cling vinyl sheets to protect the side panels from the abrasive Cordura. The Kawasaki saddlebags will work on the KLR650 and Tengai, but will not fit the KLX650.

The tail trunk is made for solo riding and extends from the back end of the luggage rack to just behind the rider. Like the saddlebags, it secures to the bike using four Fastex buckled straps that thread in and around the luggage rack assembly. When cinched down, the tail trunk is rock solid on the bike. The Cordura/foam material retains shape even when completely empty and the bottom has a thin plastic sheet to provide rigidity. I found the tail trunk to be a

(Continued on page 11)

The whole ensemble mounted on my KLR650. The tank bag works fine with the Aerostitch tank panniers. The relocation of my turn signals is not required for use of the Kawasaki bags. You will end up sitting on the cross piece for the saddle bags, but nothing a sheepskin or a doubled towel won't be able to handle and all zippers have grab straps as standard issue. The saddle bags work fantastic with the side racks from Drive Line Services 800-444-8770.

Reader Feedback

Hey Gino -

I would like my name added to the directory please. I would also like to Volunteer to be the state coordinator for Alaska if I could. As of this time my address is as below, but may change. Also this coming summer I may be going on a trip myself. I know most people come to AK and here I am leaving it, but only for a couple of months. Just a little bit about myself: I am from the Seattle area, but have decided to make AK my home. I have worked in the tourism business for 4 years and know almost everything there is to do and see around these parts. Currently I'm still in the tourism business, but will probably be ending my career in the business due to my '96 KLR. When you work in tourism here in AK you don't get to ride much and the summers are very precious here. I'm not sure what career I will choose but it will be one that lets me ride a lot more.

Thanks to newsletter I have been upgrading my KLR a bit. Centerstand, Clearview windshield, GIVI sidebags, etc. Without the lewsletter I would have never found any of these items (especially here in AK), and without these items I would not have been able to take a great fall trip. I rode from my home in Fairbanks, down to Cantwell and across the Denali Highway to Paxson and back to Fairbanks on the Richardson Highway. The Denali Highway is spectacular (135 miles of dirt road, glaciers and animals) and I recommend it to anyone coming to AK. My KLR ran perfectly except for the snow on the last day. It has the original Dunlops on it and they didn't grip real great in the 5 inches of snow that accumulated overnight, but then again what motorcycle tire will? Luckily it just ended up raining and I only had to squirm my way for about 5 miles before I got to the muck and mud the Denali Highway turns to during rainfall. The KLR is perfect for AK and the main reason I bought it.

I am also the one who called about my bike not idling this past spring. Ok, I'll admit I'm not the best with bike repairs, but it was just a really fouled up carburetor that a buddy of mine helped me fix. After that nothing but smiles.

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...Kawasaki Luggage

(Continued from page 10)

wonderful piece for traveling, but almost indispensable for commuting. It has one large main compartment that is expandable to about 30 liters. There are two generous side pockets also. The top flap has a mesh flap that has a hook and loop fastener patch. This mesh flap is excellent for storing "quick need" items that are weather proof, like rain pants. I use it for all kinds of miscellaneous items and I have gotten pretty darn good at simply reaching behind me and grabbing what I need. The tail trunk is the only piece that works well on the KLR650, Tengai and KLX650. It is easily the most versatile piece offered in the group.

The tank bag is the only piece that gets mixed reviews. For the most part, I like it, but am not too sure how it will stand up to the test of time. The tank bag is attached to a tank bra made specifically for a KLR650 tank. The bag is expandable and has a nice large, clear map window. On a recent dual sport ride, I was able to stuff the fleece liner from my jacket, a small camera and a baseball cap into the bag without expanding it. The bra has a well-finished hole for access to the gas filler cap so you don't have to fuss with anything when it's one of those rare times you have to put gas in the beast. My main concern is how well the thin vinyl material will hold up after a couple of years in the sun. The tank bag will fit the Tengai, however you will have to sandwich the bra portion of it between the fairing and the tank and provide a hole in the bra for the two faring screws. This will make quik removal a tad bit difficult.

So, here we have three excellent pieces of soft luggage made specifically for the bike we all love. What more could you ask for? Well, how about competitive pricing and availability from your local Kawasaki Dealership. The tail trunk, part number K99994-501, sells for about $76.99 while the saddle bags, part number K99994-499, sell for $114.99. Last but not least, the tank bag, part number K99994-500, sells for about $46.99. These prices may be adjusted by your local dealership. All in all, I don't think you can go wrong with this luggage. It's well made, durable (trust me, I know), and comparably priced. Just like the bike it was made to go on.

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CycoActive Products

You probably noticed the large CycoActive add on page 2. Tom Myers has been selling accessories for dual sports for many moons now and you have probably seen his fender bags marketed under the MSR label. Now Tom is onboard with us and has many, many products to offer. Check out his web site at www.cycoactive.com or e-mail him at TomMyers@cycoactive.com.

CycoActive Products, 701 34th Ave., Seattle, WA. 98122, 425-323-2349

Dual Star

Dual Star will be completing their next batch of center stands in mid-January. Mike also wanted me to let you all know that he is selling the Acerbis line of products as well as Pelican cases for those wishing to make their own hard luggage. **Dual Star 425-776-7433**.

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Reader Feedback

(Continued from page 11)

You can also print my phone number or just give my number to people if they want to ask questions about anything here in Alaska. I may not know all the answers, but I can sure find them out.

Hope all is well in NM.

Gerald Berube
PO Box 74193
Fairbanks, AK 99707
(907) 455-7941

Gerald,

Thanks for the feedback and offer to be Alaska state coordinator. Sounds like you are having fun with the KLR. Keep in touch. - Ed.

******

Gino:

I went on a DS ride with a few BMW riders and thought I would briefly share the experience.

The KLR "competition" was a GS1000, a GS1100, and the new F650 Funduro. I have ridden with the GS1000 many times and can say that it is a very DS capable bike. I can't say the same for the GS1100 and the F650.

In the Phoenix area the trails are dominated by loose rocks (big and small) and step inclines and descents. For the most part, high speeds are not possible and the KLR rarely gets out of second gear. I would consider many of the trails very technical and some extremely technical. Of course, we have some great easy stuff, also.

In short, the GS1100 and F650 couldn't hang. Mainly because of first gear being too tall on both bikes. These BMW's would have to hit the tough uphills with too much speed to keep the engine in a respectable power band. This extra speed made even some of the more simple uphills look like a Sturgis hillclimb event. Many times the BMW were forced to stop on the uphill and the KLR would just chug on by. At the end of the day the GS1100 rider was thankful that he didn't spill the bike. The F650 rider littered the trail to the Cochran Coke Ovens and back with all sorts of expensive little plastic BMW parts from his spills. Both bikes retreated back to the pavement well before completing the climb to the Coke Ovens. The KLR and GS1000 had no problems, but it was exciting at times!

Before the ride home we were talking at the trailhead. The two BMW riders were talking a different tune about the KLR. One of the last comments they made was, "it works fine in the dirt, but you can't tour it." I told them I had done a few 500 mile days on it at interstate speeds. After a brief pause the interested F650 rider asked, "What does that thing cost?"

Great newsletter. Keep up the good work.

Pat
pat_hensley@hp.com

PS: Let any newsletter readers know that if they need a DS orientation while in Phoenix, I'll be happy to provide it.

Pat,

At the risk of being accused of beemer bashing, I must say I have heard reports like this from other riders who have BMW GS riding buddies. The "touring" argument that always seems to be trown out as a last resort doesn't hold water either as I have toured on my KLR with no problems at all. We can all take a lot of pride in knowing that we own one of the best all-around motorcycles ever made. - Ed.

******

Hi,

A nicely done and useful website. I have a '93 KLR650 and may be able to join in the '98 Moab trip. I'm in Colorado Springs.

I wonder if you or anyone has any experience using additives such as Prolong or Militek-1. The Prolong website (http://www.prolongoil.com) has a report of a KLR650 with very impressive numbers.

Militek-1 (http://www.apdinc.com/Milstart.htm) appears to be a similar product. Perhaps you would forward e-mail or post this letter to the subscribers. Any info would be appreciated.

Thanks, Rex Hefferan
rhefferan@omnipoint.com

Rex,

I have no experience with any of these products, but maybe some of our readers can help you out. Hope to see you in Moab. –Ed.

******

Dear Gino,

Congratulations on a fine publication! I subscribe to numerous motorcycle magazines often wondering if they are worth their subscription rates. My subscription to *K650DSN* has

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.....Updates

(Continued from page 11)

NEXT ISSUE:

KLX650 Hop-up and Project KLX report, Thunder Products Dial-a-Jet, Follow up on Corbin Seat.

Dual Sport Alliance

Suzuki DR650SE

Prior to my owning a KLR650, I owned a 1994 Suzuki DR650. It was not a happy experience. No matter what I did to the bike, it never seemed capable of meeting my expectations. I finally gave up on the "Suzi" and bought a repo'ed 1995 KLR at my local dealer. I remember that they had also just received the all new 1996 DR650SE and asked me if I wanted to take it for a spin. At that point, I wanted nothing to do with the DR650 new or old, and declined the offer. Good thing. If I had rode that 1996 DR650SE, you would most likely be reading *Suzuki 650 Dual Sport News* right now. R&S Kawasaki/Suzuki/KTM graciously lent me the use of a 1997 DR650SE for a few hours this past fall, and I must admit that it was tough to return the bike; I loved it. No, this doesn't mean the KLR is on the auction block, but the DR is simply one of the most well-sorted-out bikes I have rode and would be an excellent machine for anyone to own.

On paper the DR is an impressive machine. A full fourteen pounds lighter than a KLR650 and a shorter seat height in stock form. Add the lowering kit and the seat height is dropped by an inch. A single carb, four valve 650cc engine, cooled by an oil cooler that is almost as big as the KLR650 radiator, supplies the go, and a twin piston front brake and single piston rear supply the stop.

Immediately after climbing aboard the DR650, you settle into typical upright, dual sport ergonomics. The bars are exactly were you expect them and switches are clear and well placed. Only being on the bike for a few seconds, I felt like I had been familiar with it for years. Suzuki chose not to equip the DR with a tachometer and a round speedo is tilted in a manner that you are looking into the face at an angle causing some parallax with regards to the needle and the numbers. You also notice that the DR650SE feels small and short, a characteristic that can be good or bad. I personally enjoy small bikes and bikes that feel small. Others, however, like the feel of a larger machine especially for long highway rides. Thumb the starter and the DR fires up with a healthy chuffa, chuffa. The sound is quite muted out of the end of the finely finished stainless muffler and the engine at idle is smooth and quiet. Snick the DR into gear and let the clutch out and you immediately notice that the 650 has a lower 1st gear than the KLR, as well as a smoother transmission and clutch. Moving on down the road, the Suzuki is a delight as the tranny is one of the smoothest I have experienced and the big thumper is smooth and quiet. Which brings up a question. How can an oil cooled single be quieter than a single which has a water jacket around it? I rode the DR to some of the same places I rode the KTM Adventure for the last test and must say that the ride was far more pleasant. The DR's gearing is spaced perfectly for a dual sport; a low first gear and a high 5th gear with the other three gears balanced neatly in between. The great low-end torque of the Suzuki make it a boon to dart through traffic with and the added benefit of sitting high and upright make it a very good choice for urban assault. But how does it do off-road?

First on the agenda is a stretch of rutted and wash-board road. My KLR650 handles this section well, but you know your ridding on a very irregular surface. The DR650, on the other hand, almost had me convinced that the road had been graded since I last rode over it. But the ripples in the road were still there; the DR just has a very good suspension and is able to glide over the irregularities competently. Next was a stretch of double track that had some sections of loose sand. Here the DR tended to wag its front end a little more that I expected. It is most like due to the poor quality Bridgestone's it was wearing than any front-end geometry problem. Nonetheless, the DR motored through the section of trail competently with plenty-o-power on tap. The off-road test finished off with about a mile of single track with

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My DR650

Photo and Text by David E. Minor

One hates to be reduced to a demographic, but the term "re-entry rider" pretty well describes me. I briefly owned a Harley 250cc Sprint when I was in college. This introduction to motorcycling was followed by a 30 year hiatus, after which time, nearing age 50, I decided it was time to resume riding. After completing the Motorcycle Safety Foundation rider course, I started shopping for a bike, something inexpensive that I could ride until I decided what I really wanted. I ended up buying a mint 1979 Yamaha XS1100 Special. I never intended to buy something that big, but I liked the looks of it, it fit me pretty well, and I somehow stayed upright during my brief test ride. The XS1100 was a great bike, and I enjoyed it a lot, but I never felt entirely in control of it. It was simply too big, too heavy, and maybe too powerful for an inexperienced rider. Sometime during my thinking and reading and shopping, the Kawasaki KLR 650 and dual-purpose machines in general entered my consciousness, and I was intrigued. Here was, I thought, a lightweight nimble machine which I could rde anywhere I had the nerve, and go as fast as anyone could possibly need. Being something of a Luddite, I liked the idea of a big bike that made do with one cylinder, where the monster Yamaha needed four of everything to produce its power. In addition, I was anxious to try off-pavement, if not actually off-road riding, the thought of which on the freight-train Yamaha was somewhat forbidding.

I had just made up my mind to buy a KLR 650 when I learned that the 1997 allotment was basically gone from the dealers. At that point I determined to put the whole purchase on hold until the 198's came out. Wouldn't you know, I didn't have the patience for that? I kept thinking and reading and looking. Cycle World, in the April 1997 issue, pushed me farther along with their comparison of the ATK 605 ES, KTM 620 R/XC, the Honda XR650L, and the Suzuki DR 650 SE. Like many, I was disappointed that the Kawasaki

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... DR650SE

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dips into sand washes. Here is where the low seat height coupled with 10 inches of suspension travel really help out. You don't have any bottoming and you can dab your foot when you need to steady things a bit.

My test loop finished with about 5 miles of Interstate riding. Here is where Suzuki's dual sport formula has a few flaws. By this time, I had been on the DR650 for about one hour and my behind was beginning to feel the effects of the narrow, crowned seat. For those who treasure the wide seats of the KLR650, the Suzuki seat is a let down. Even though the suspension was handling the freeway expansion joints well, at this point every little bump transmitted displeasure to my butt. I also realized that I had been spoiled by the effective KLR650 mini-fairing. On the DR at 60 mph, I was in "Full Sail" mode which meant a fatigued back and arms would soon follow. This is unfortunate, because, as far as I could tell, the engine was willing to go faster than my body could handle. It was a mute point, however, as Suzuki chose to curse the DR650 with a small 3.3 gallon fuel tank so extended stints in the saddle will be rare. Exiting on the off ramp and blending into traffic, as only a big thumper can, chased those nagging nit-picks away, though. I returned to the dealership stepped back and took a long look at the DR. What a wonderful bike. Yes, I know, the color scheme and graphics look like they were designed by the same clown who drew up the Denver Bronco's uniforms, but what the heck; yellow fork boots will set you apart from the crowd.

In conclusion, the Suzuki brings a lot to the table as an all-arounder. Excellent engine and suspension will leave a KLR and KLX for dead in the rough stuff and make the DR the best 650 dual sport motorcycle on the market as I see it. Availability of a factory lowering kit makes it ideal for the vertically challenged and a worthy urban warrior. Place a good rider in the saddle and street biased tires on the rims

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.... My DR

(Continued from page 14)

KLR 650 was not included in the comparison, but to be fair, the mission of the KLR is not quite comparable to the others in the article.

Next came my own personal subjective test-riding comparison. Here I must thank the folks at M&M Honda, and particularly Rick Alcon and his staff at R&S Kawasaki in Albuquerque, where I was given carte blanche to test-ride anything which took my fancy, new or used. I rode the afore-mentioned Honda and Suzuki, both new and used versions of the KLR 650, and a used Kawasaki KLX 650. I ended up buying a 1997 Suzuki DR650SE, and I am quite happy with it. At the same time, I might be just as happy with one of the others. For me, the Honda (XR650L) had too much engine vibration, too high a seat (and I'm 614"!), too big a gap between lst and 2nd gears. It might be fine off-road, but on the street, it seemed quite uncivilized. I later learned there is a mountain of aftermarket equipment available for the Honda, which is worth considering. The Kawasaki KLR 650 has many appealing features: I like the liquid cooling, the monster fuel tank, the mini-fairing, the substantial luggage rack, and the subdued green painttreatment. Like the Honda, however, I thought the engine vibration excessive and the seat too high. Worst of all, I didn't like the flimsy, bouncy front fork, which I had read in this very journal needs upgraded springs to make it acceptably ridable. I asked myself, who needs that? The Kawasaki KLX 650 simply didn't make sense to me. It was a discontinued, more-expensive version of the KLR 650 but with almost none of the KLR virtues, and with vices of its own, including a small gas tank and an uncomfortable seat.

For my money, the Suzuki DR 650 SE was the best choice. It is a better street bike than my street bike (the XS1100) had been, thanks to its more modern and sophisticated chassis and suspension. The DR has the smoothest-running engine, a reasonable seat height, nice transmission ratios, and looks, which despite the graphics ' are all-of-a-piece. Handsome as it is, the KLR 650 styling never seemed quite integrated, to my eye. The only area where the DR 650 is lacking is in seat comfort. I've finally concluded the stock saddle must be replaced. Learning recently that Corbin is now making a saddle for the 196-and-newer DR 650, I ordered one sight-unseen. That is something of a gamble, and if other readers have experience with alternative DR 650 saddles, I'd sure like to hear about it. Sure, I'd like a bigger fuel tank. As it is, when I'm in the boonies, I simply top up the tank every time I see a gas pump. Maybe an aftermarket tank some day. I'd like a big solid luggage rack like on the KLR, too. I odered the Suzuki accessory rack, but when I got it and saw how tiny it was, and learned that installation required drilling large holes in the rear fender, I opted to send it back to Suzuki. As it turns out, I have a really nice Marsee tail bag which fits quite nicely on the passenger grab handles, which serve also as a kind of luggage rack on the DR 650. Liquid cooling? It might be nice to have, but motocycles have gotten by pretty well for a long time without it. And what does a Luddite need with a radiator anyway?

So, despite these niggling considerations, when I'm actually riding the DR, I'm a completely happy man, and that's whether I'm trying to get bogged down in a sandy wash somewhere in the outback or pretending to be pursued down a winding rural road by a pack of Norton Manxes. How did I let that hiatus become thirty years long?

Haves, Wants and Needs

WANTED: Stock windshield for KLR650. Call Bogdan Swider 719-389-6373 leave message.

FOR SALE: 1996 KTM 400EXC Enduro 4 stroke. ProTaper handlebars, rear rack, excellent condition, less than 100 miles. Call Bruce Kentner 505-892-0032.

FOR SALE: Stock 1995 KLR fork springs, 2.5K miles, $15.00 postage paid. Rick in Salt Lake City 801-484-3240 evening. No call back means sold.

FOR SALE: Five Stars engine guards for KLR650, good shape. $70.00

Rojo AirHawk fully adjustable air inflated seat cushion. Hardly used $80.00

Eclipse Sport bike saddlebags and matching duffel $30.00

IMS plastic tank for KLR650, white, a little beat up $40.00

FOR SALE New subframe for KLR650. $150.00 plus shipping. Call Marge Palmer 918-436-7005

... DR650SE

(Continued from page 14)

and the Suzi will surprise many sport bike riders on early Sunday mornings. IMS and Acerbis are both eager to sell you their larger fuel tanks, a center stand is available from Five-Stars and the wonderful side support racks are available from Driveline Services. Adding all of these extras simply makes the $5600.00 price tag jump even higher, though.

If you are looking for the best 50/50 dual sport, look no further than the DR650. If you are looking for a capable dual sport tourer, however, the DR650 can't hold a candle to the KLR650. Despite the DR650's excellent resume, the KLR650's low price, proven history, and ability to perform in dirt, road and highway make it the better dollar for dollar choice for those who like to travel.

.... Reader Feedback

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more than paid for itself by turning me on to Avon's Gripster. I was prepared to pay considerably more for a replacement rear tire. I then chose the Gripster after reading your review. I've barely scrubbed it in, but I'm sure it will perform better than the (scary) stock Dunlop on my KLX.

I have a few questions I'm hoping you can help me with: does anyone make stiffer fork springs for the KLX650. I read with interest your tech tip's in the March-April issue about Progressive Suspensions springs for the KLR and am hoping something can be done with my KLX- The bike is heavy enough without the fork making the machine feel like a sinking barge upon decelaration.

1994 KLX650C

I was also curious about the KLX650C carb needle upgrade in the '96 November-December 'Tech Tips': were you referring to the needle from the off-road KLX650A? It appears, from looking at my shop manual, that the dirt only KLX may have been given the 'C-4' designation in 1996, while my dual purpose 1994 KLX650 is a 'C-2'. Could you provide the part numbers for the jet needle, E-clip and collar described in your feature?

I am eagerly awaiting your evaluation of aftermarket exhaust systems and hope you could include some for the KLX (as well as other performance modifications). KLX production may be dead, but there are still loyal riders out there! My thanks to you for providing an excellent and informative newsletter.

Chambers Cromwell

Chambers,

Thanks for the feedback on the newsletter, glad you like it.

I am the first to admit that the K650DSN has been lacking in KLX650 information and apologize to the KLX650 subscribers we have. Just for the record, we have twelve subscribers that own Tengais and only 4 KLX650C subscribers.

To the best of my knowledge, the only front suspension upgrade available for the KLX650 is the Race Tech Gold Valve cartridge emulator. I know of two readers who have upgraded the front forks with the Gold Valve units and both are very happy with them. You can get further info on the Race Tech units from your local dealership.

The carb jet needle used in the KLX650 needle upgrade was from the off-road only KLX650R. In retrospect, the needle did not work well in the dual sport KLR650 and KLX650. There was not significant power gain and fuel consumption dropped significantly. You would be better off rejetting with the K&N or Factory jet kits that are available. I am currently testing the Thunder Products Dial-A-Jet and have gotten some very promising results with it, especially in conjunction with an after market pipe. Anyway, the part numbers are as follows. Needle #160091794, collar #921431667, clip #920371401.

Exhaust systems are on the list of items to be reviewed shortly. Right now, the project KLX650C in my garage is running a Cobra ISDE pipe and I am waiting for the release of the new SuperTrapp IDS mufflers for the KLR650 and KLX650. I have been happy with the Cobra exhaust, though its note is barely acceptable for my quiet tastes. DG, FMF and Yoshimura all make very nice exhaust pipes for the KLX650C. Unfortunately, the tight bend of the header pipe on both the KLR and KLX dictate that the header pipe be cast and not of the bent pipe variety.

Model designations for the KLR, KLX and Tengai are as follows. All KLR650s are A series machines, i.e. A1, A2, A3...A12 with the sequential number relating to the year of manufacture. So a KLR650 A1 was the first model in 1987 and a KLR650 A10 being a 1996 model. Tengai's or KL650, were B models with only the B1 making it stateside. The B2 and above models had very nice flush mounted front turnsignals. The KLX650 is the C model with a number appended just as in the case of the KLR650 and Tengai. It is worthy of note that the European version of the KLR650 after 1995 now has the C designator.

With a little luck, I hope to have a full write up on the KLX650 along with a hop-up article by Steven Johnson, our resident KLX650 guru, in the next issue of K650DSN. -Ed.

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